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FEATURING THE Elementals

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JM EDITORIAL

Wow! Has it really been *five years* since the original JUSTICE MACHINE was published by Noble Comics? Seems like just yesterday.

As with most comics, JUSTICE MACHINE started with #1, and for a first attempt at publishing a full-length book in color, it wasn't too bad—or does nostalgia color my memory? Probably.

Anyway, we had fun, and that's what I remember the most. What helped make it fun were some of the people involved—people whom I've grown to love as individuals and professionals. They didn't all start out with the first issue, but they're all still part of the Justice Machine family.

Some of those people include **Bill Loebs,** alias William Francis Loebs, alias William Messner-Loebs, who helped design some of the original JM costumes and who was instrumental in getting the book off the ground. In the course of JM's first life, Bill acted as editor and inker, and (as the series progressed) writer. Currently, he's known for his JOURNEY series, published by Fantagraphics Books, and is now also writing JONNY QUEST for Comico.

Then there was **Dave Wallace,** creator of Bloodmaster, who made his first appearance in issue #3. At the ripe old age of seventeen, after taking an art course from yours truly, Dave started drawing certain characters from the Justice Machine. Though he's not in comics at the moment, hopefully someday we'll get the opportunity to see more of his work in print.

And let's not forget **Kevin Siembieda,** who inked some of the first issue and painted some of the later full color issues. Kevin now heads Palladium Books, a gaming company in Detroit (for whom I also do some illustration work), and is responsible for the JM role-playing game. Pick it up. Buy it. I like getting fat royalty checks!

Let's see, wasn't there a guy by the name of **Bill Reinhold** who wound up drawing the Machiners for Noble Comics and then the JM ANNUAL for Texas Comics? Bill is a very talented guy from Chicago, also known for his work on First Comics' BADGER. But he's picky, picky, picky when it comes to who inks his work; I've been one of his inkers, and so has Jeff Dee.

Yes, **Jeff Dee**—who has also done some work for Comico on the ROBOTECH books. He's another whose inks graced the pages of the original JUSTICE MACHINE. God, is he good!

Another JM alumnus is **Aubrey Bradford** who, as an artist in his own right, redesigned the new Demon costume and inked parts of the original JUSTICE MACHINE book. A native Detroiter, he also illustrates for Palladium Books and does assorted advertising work.

There were others, of course—letterers, colorists, assistants who filled in the black areas and erased pages, but I've been given only so much room to devote to the past.

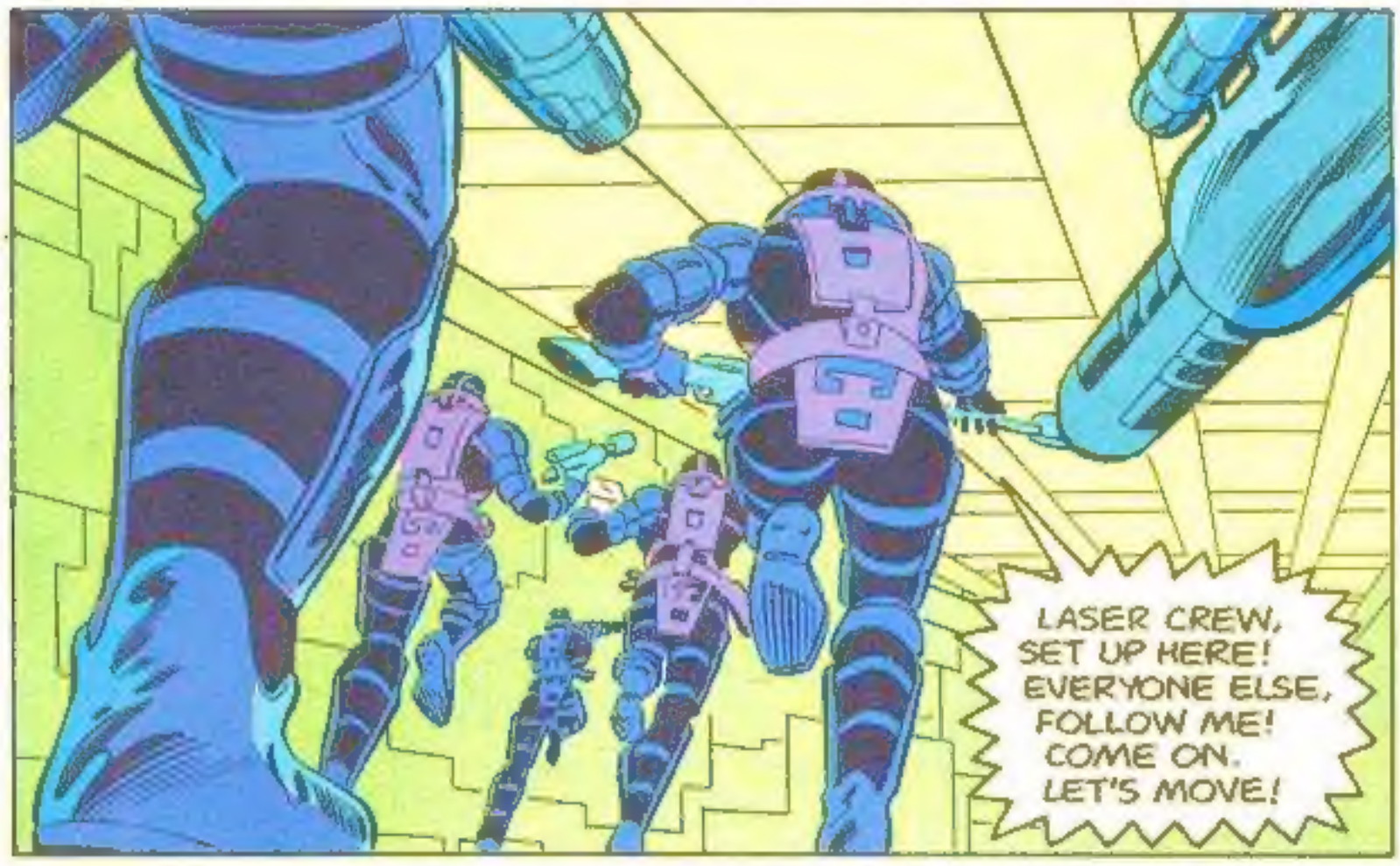
The present brings us to the *new* JUSTICE MACHINE, which you now hold in your hands. Written by **Bill Willingham** (whose Elementals first appeared in the JM ANNUAL), and pencilled and inked by me, this storyline takes place before the original JUSTICE MACHINE series—before the Machiners came to Earth and before their disillusionment with the Georwellian government.

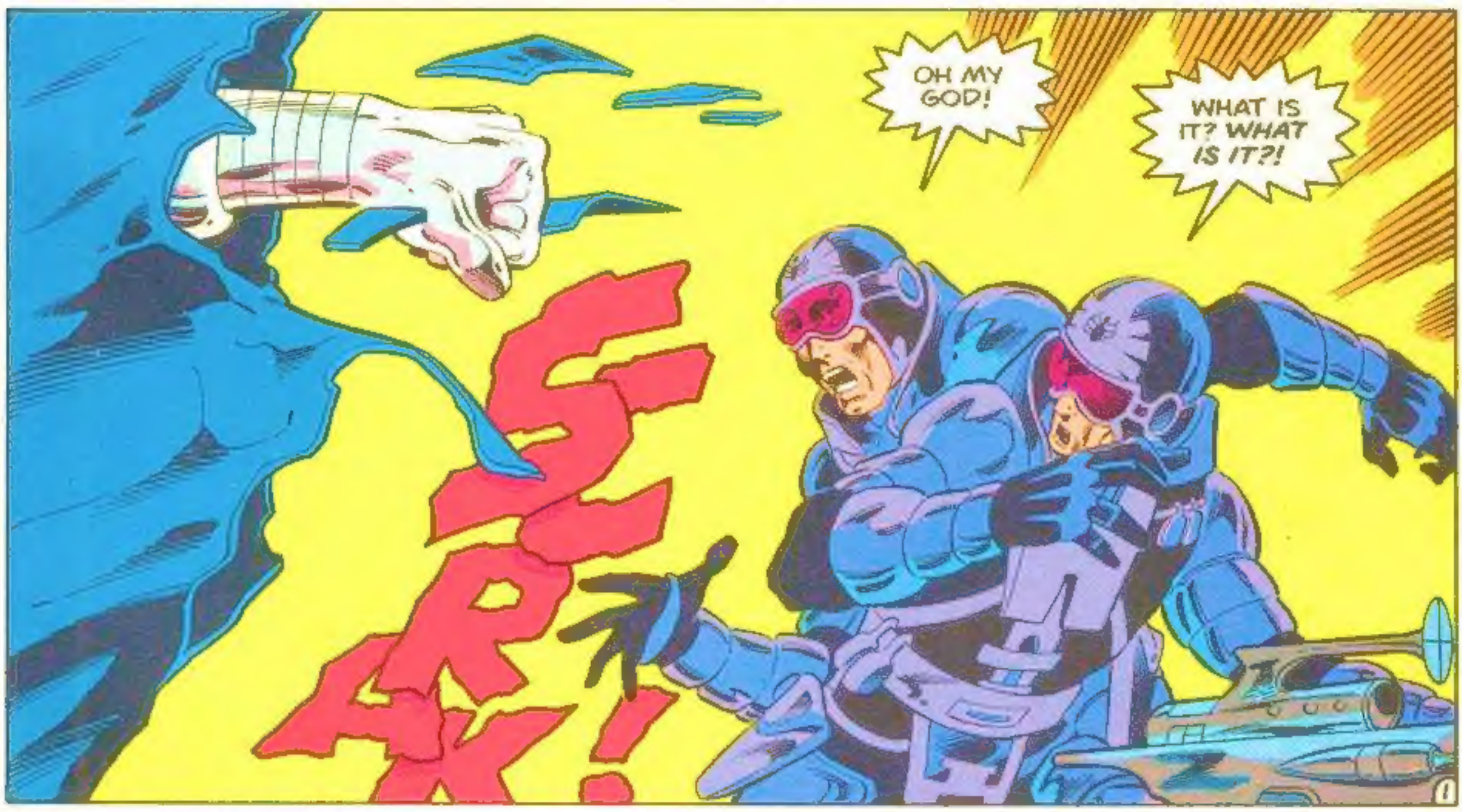
Some things have changed: a costume here, an idea there. The plots and art are more finely tuned, the printing is better, the distribution farther-reaching. But one thing hasn't changed—it's still fun.

I'm having a blast.

Next issue, Bill Willingham writes.

—Mike Gustovich





JUSTICE MACHINE featuring the ELEMENTALS # 1, May 1986. Published by **COMICO The Comic Company,** 1547 DeKalb St., Norristown, PA 19401. JUSTICE MACHINE is TM Comico The Comic Company and © 1986 Michael Gustovich. ELEMENTALS is TM and © 1986 Bill Willingham. This story and the distinctive likenesses herein are © 1986 Michael Gustovich and Bill Willingham. All other material, unless otherwise specified, is © 1986 Comico The Comic Company. All rights reserved. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this publication and those of any existing or one existing person or institution is intended and any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. **JUSTICE MACHINE featuring the ELEMENTALS** is published monthly. Printed in the U.S.A.

CHAPTER ONE:

The DARKFORCE AFFAIR

WHAT IT IS, IS THE *JUSTICE MACHINE!*

I ADVISE YOU ALL TO *SURRENDER. NOW!*

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR BREATH, FEARLESS LEADER. THESE MERCENARY PUNKS CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING BUT THE ELOQUENCE OF DEADLY FORCE!

YYAAAAGH!

OOOFF!

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU ALL THE WAY, GUYS.

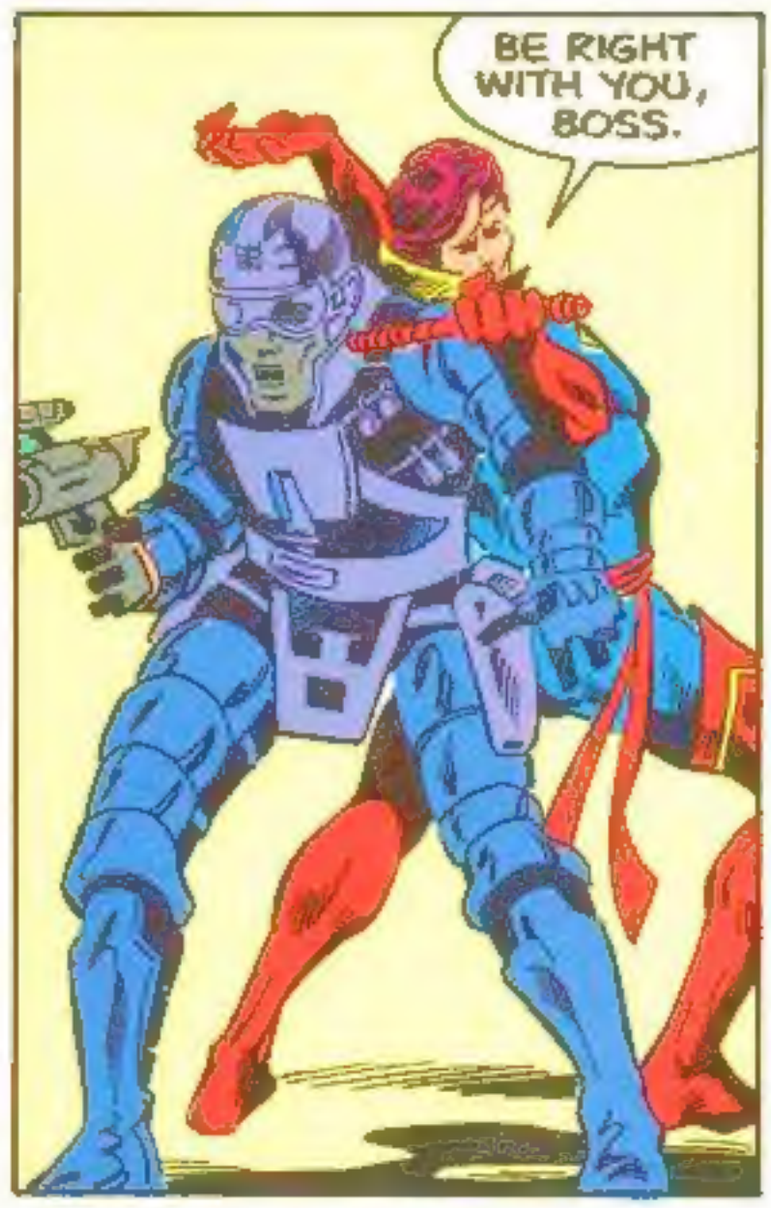
SHAKOW!

CREATED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
MIKE GUSTOVICH

WRITTEN BY BILL WILLINGHAM · COLORED BY TOM VINCENT · LETTERED BY BOB PINAHA · EDITED BY DIANA SCHUTZ

JUSTICE MACHINE

TITAN, BLAZER, WE CAN'T WASTE TOO MUCH TIME ON THESE GUARDS-- CONFINEMENT MANEUVER #4! DEMON?


BE RIGHT WITH YOU, BOSS.

AAACCK!

ONE MAKE-SHIFT CAGE, AT YOUR SERVICE.

THIS IS CHALLENGER. WE HAVE PRISONERS IN SECTION A-12. MOVE IN NOW AND TAKE THEM INTO CUSTODY.

WE'RE COMING IN NOW, SIR.

DIVINER, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YET?
"THE BEAST CROSSES THE TOWER. THE MACHINE HAS BREACHED OUR STRONGHOLD."
I'VE GOT A FAINT FIX ON HIM. HE'S DEFINITELY *THIS* WAY.
GET READY.
"THE THREE OF LASERS OPPOSES THEM. THE MACHINE CAN BE TRAPPED."
NOW!
TZZOW!
OOPS!
PTTOWW!
LOOK OUT!
TZZAPP!
"THE STARSHIP COVERS THEM. THE MACHINE HAS SURVIVED THE AMBUSH."

THIS PLATING FROM THE CEILING WILL SHIELD US, BUT NOT FOR VERY LONG.

SSKRAACK

EZZPOW!

ONE DOWN.

THOK!

...AND THREE.

FLOK!

THERE'S NUMBER TWO...

NICE PIECE OF WORK, DEMON.

NO TROUBLE AT ALL.

MAYBE WE SHOULD QUESTION THEM.

GOOD IDEA.

NOW WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHERE YOUR BOSS IS HIDING OUT?

ARE YOU KIDDING?! I'M JUST SECURITY HERE. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE *MASTER* IS.

HIS HEARTBEAT HAS JUST JUMPED--MICRO-TREMORS IN HIS VOICE. HE'S *LYING*, CHALLENGER!

SO, WE'RE NOT QUITE TELLING THE TRUTH? TSK. TSK.

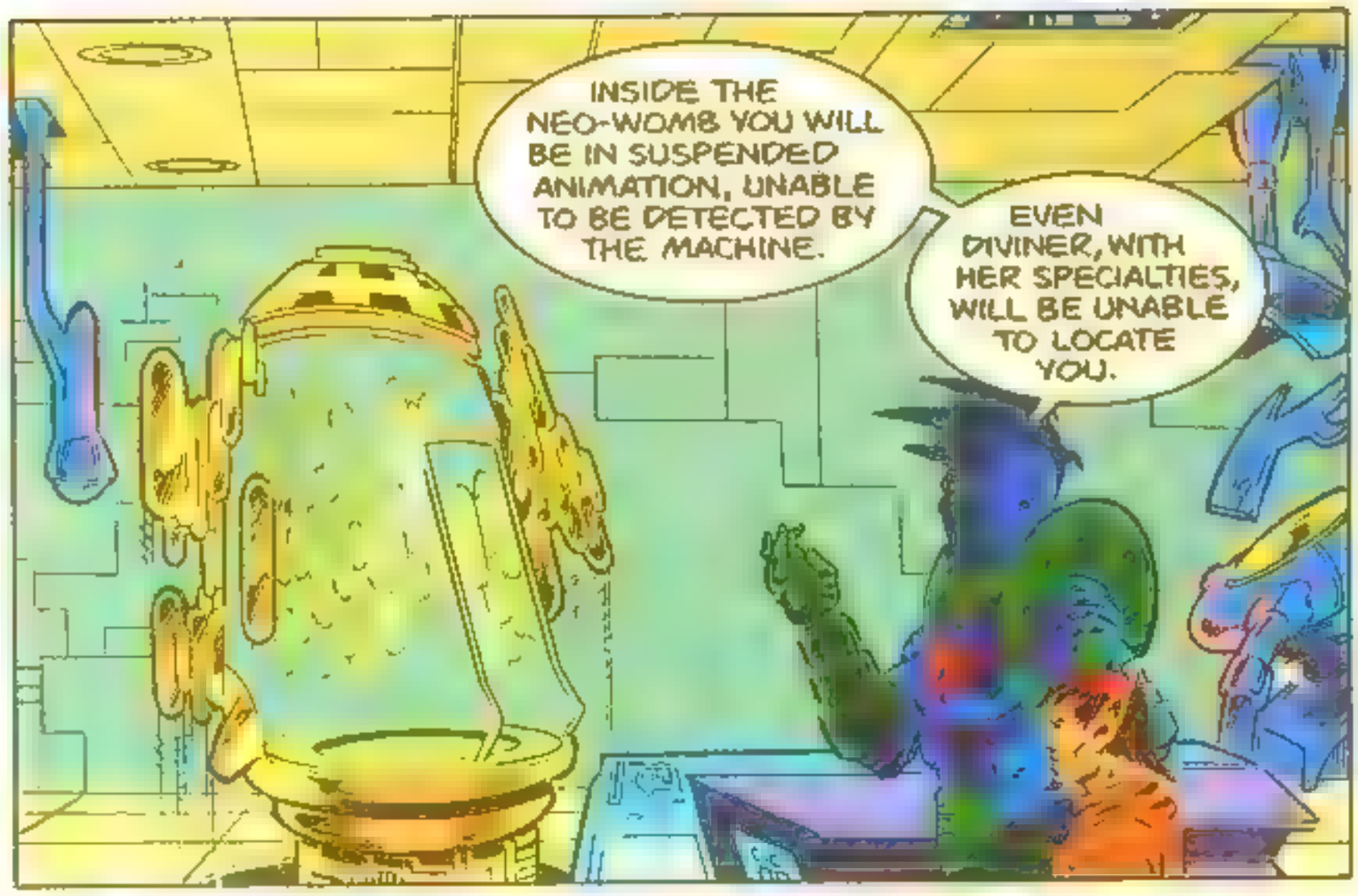
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST RECONSIDER WHAT WE'VE SAID, DON'T YOU THINK?

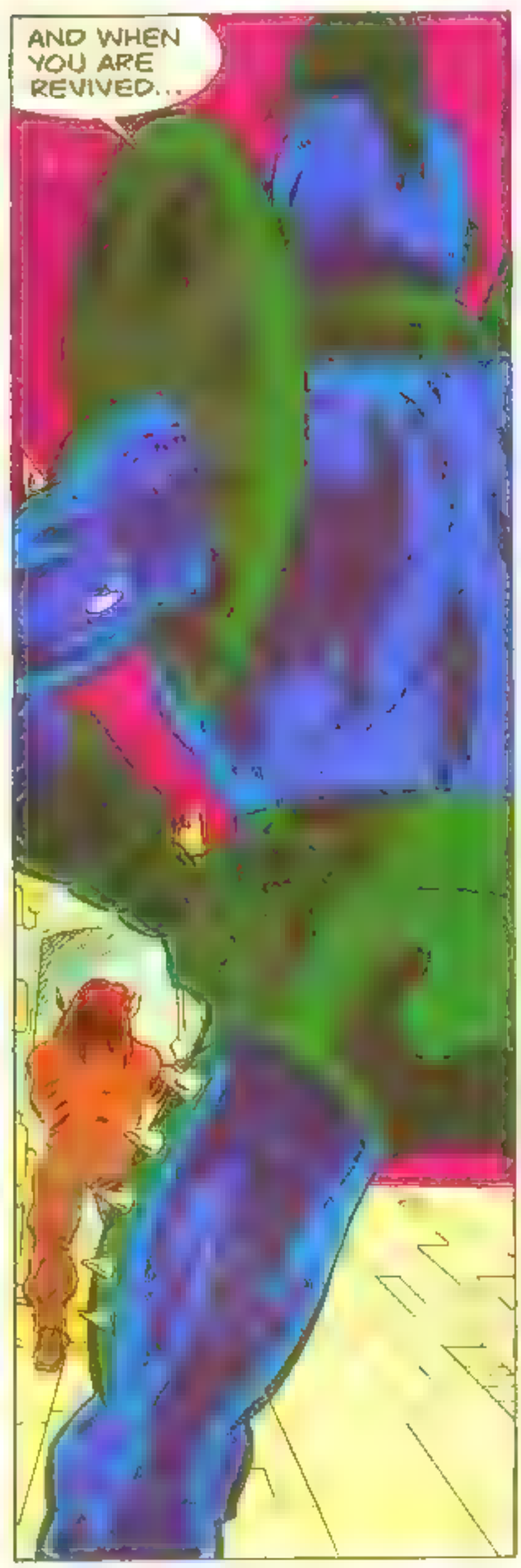
THE MACHINE HAS DEFEATED YOUR FORCES. THEY WILL BE HERE SOON.
"THE PRINCESS FOLLOWS THE SPIDER. IT IS JUST AS YOU HAVE SAID, MASTER."

YES, JUST AS I HAVE SAID.

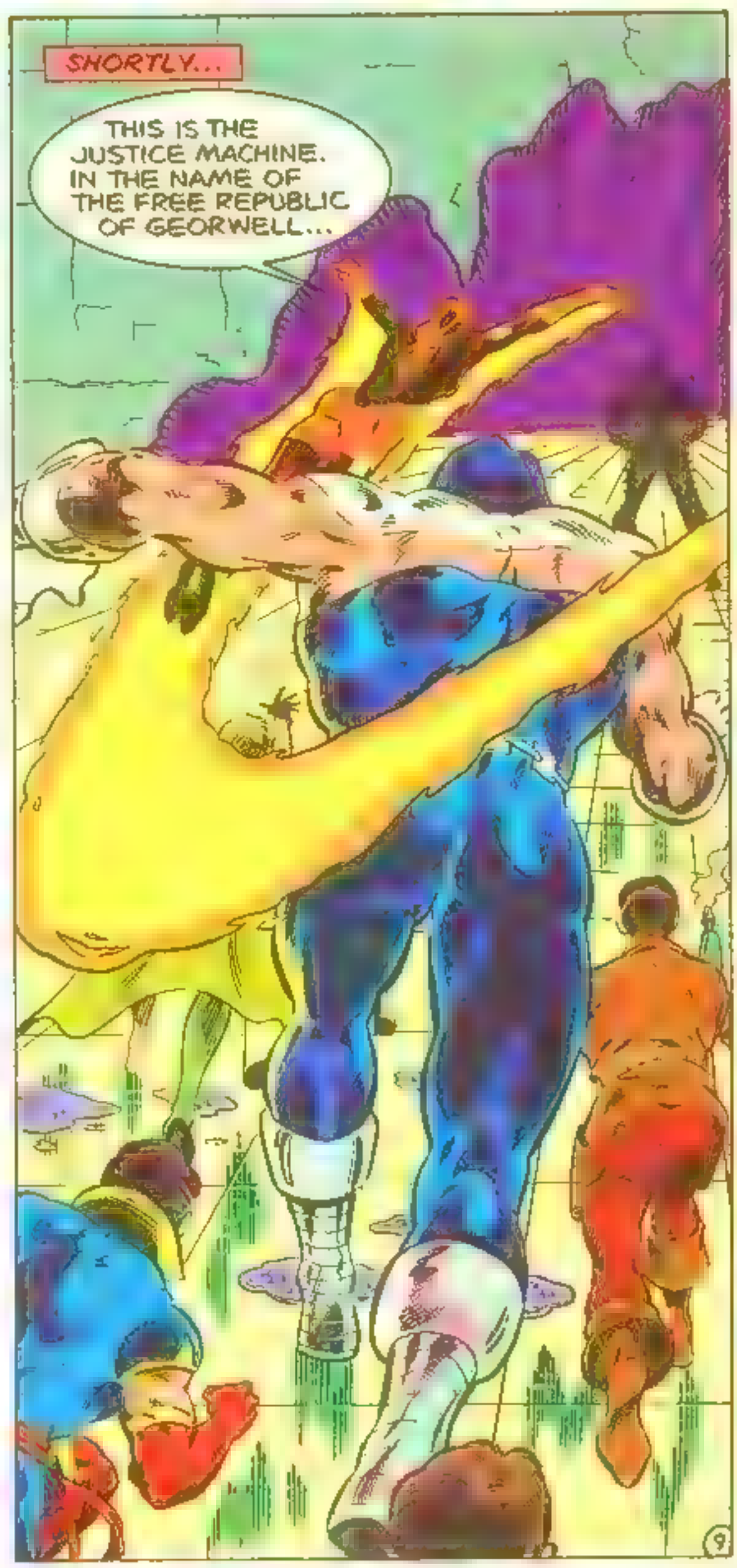
NOW, QUICKLY! YOU CANNOT BE HERE WHEN THEY ARRIVE.

CLICK


INSIDE THE NEO-WOMB YOU WILL BE IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION, UNABLE TO BE DETECTED BY THE MACHINE.
EVEN DIVINER, WITH HER SPECIALTIES, WILL BE UNABLE TO LOCATE YOU.


AND WHEN YOU ARE REVIVED...

" REMEMBER OUR PLAN FOLLOW IT PRECISELY."


SHORTLY...
THIS IS THE JUSTICE MACHINE. IN THE NAME OF THE FREE REPUBLIC OF GEORWELL...

FREE REPUBLIC?! HOW APPROPRIATELY DOGMATIC.
GEORWELL IS A REPRESSIVE POLICE-STATE AND YOU, ITS CHIEF ENFORCERS.
AND I AM THE DARK FORCE, FOREVER OPPOSED TO YOUR "ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY."
ANOTHER HOODLUM WITH A LOT OF TIRED OLD SPEECHES. A BUNCH OF SECONDHAND SLOGANS HAVE NO MORE CHANCE OF TURNING AN OPPORTUNISTIC CROOK INTO A LIBERATOR, THAN THEY DO OF KEEPING YOU SAFE FROM ONE HELL OF A BEATING.

SMAPAW!

TAKE HIM DOWN, MACHINERS!

POW!

AFTER ALL OF THAT, HE'S STILL STANDING?

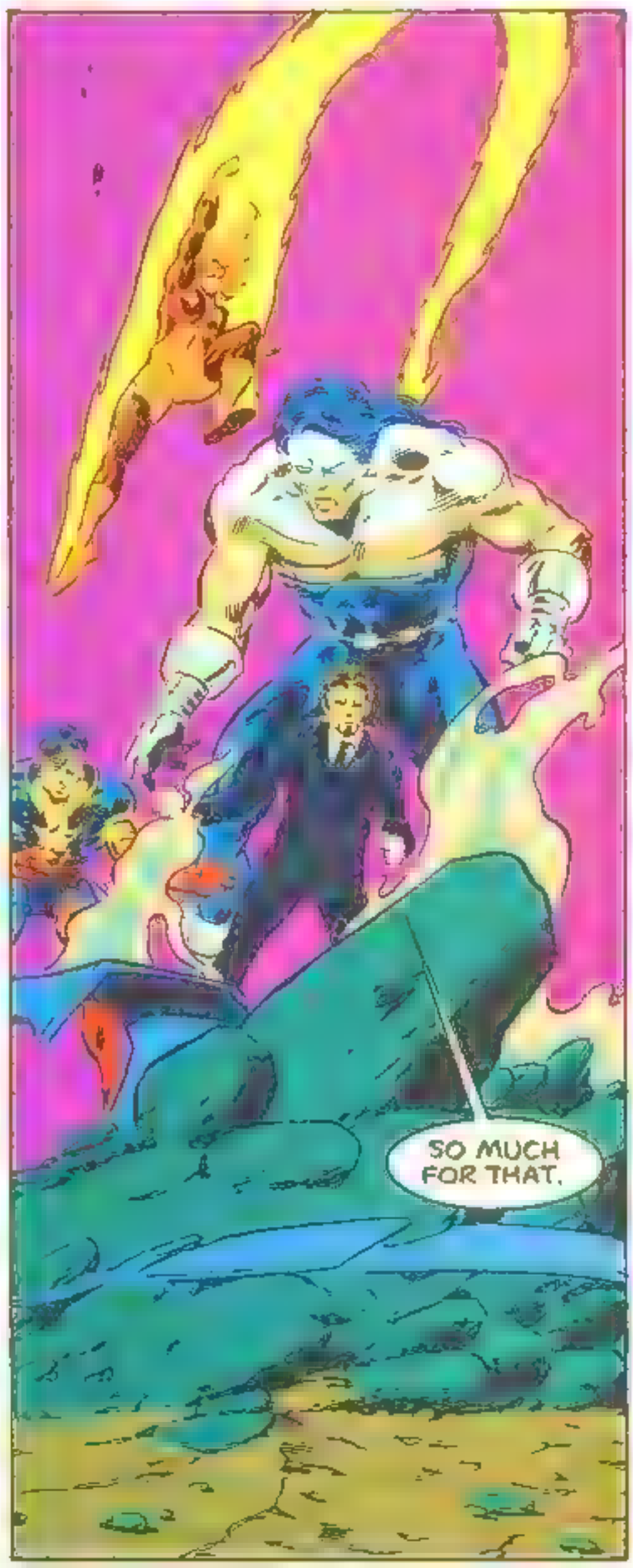
NOT ONLY STANDING, BUT *MAD!*

LOOK OUT! HE'S GETTING READY TO...

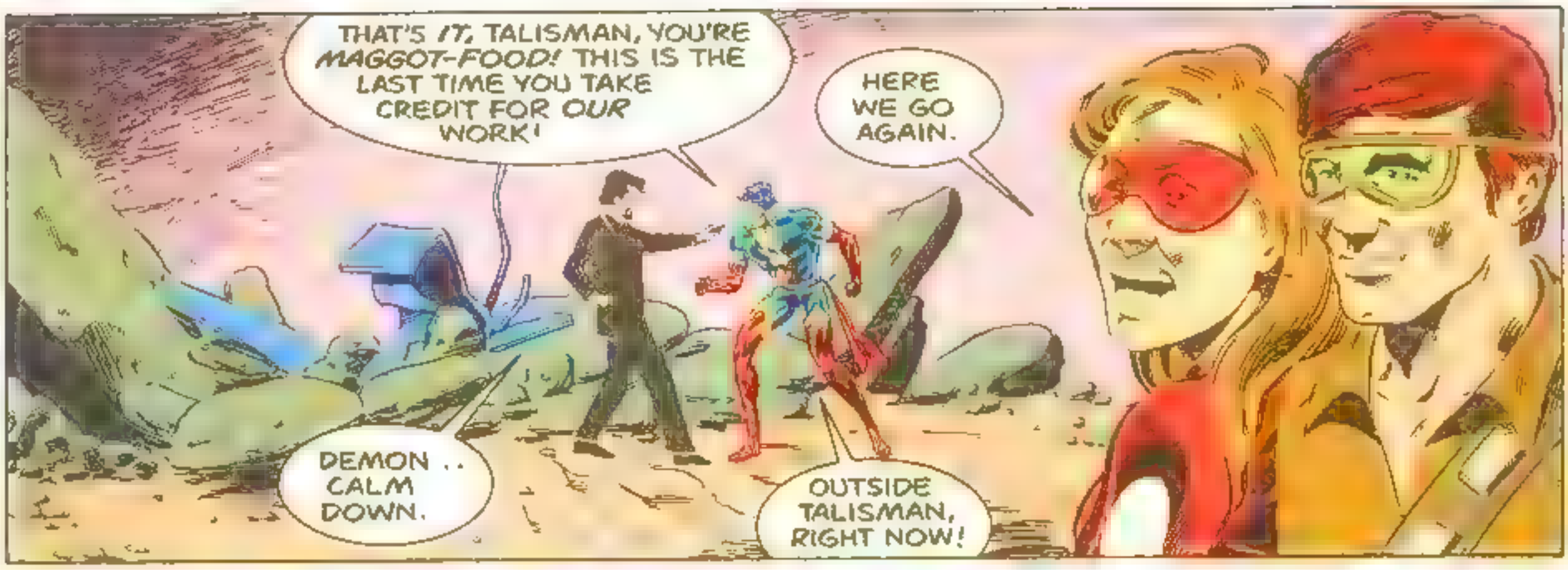
GET ME OUT OF HERE!
WATCH OUT, YOU CLUMSY...!

TZSAPP!
TZSAPP!

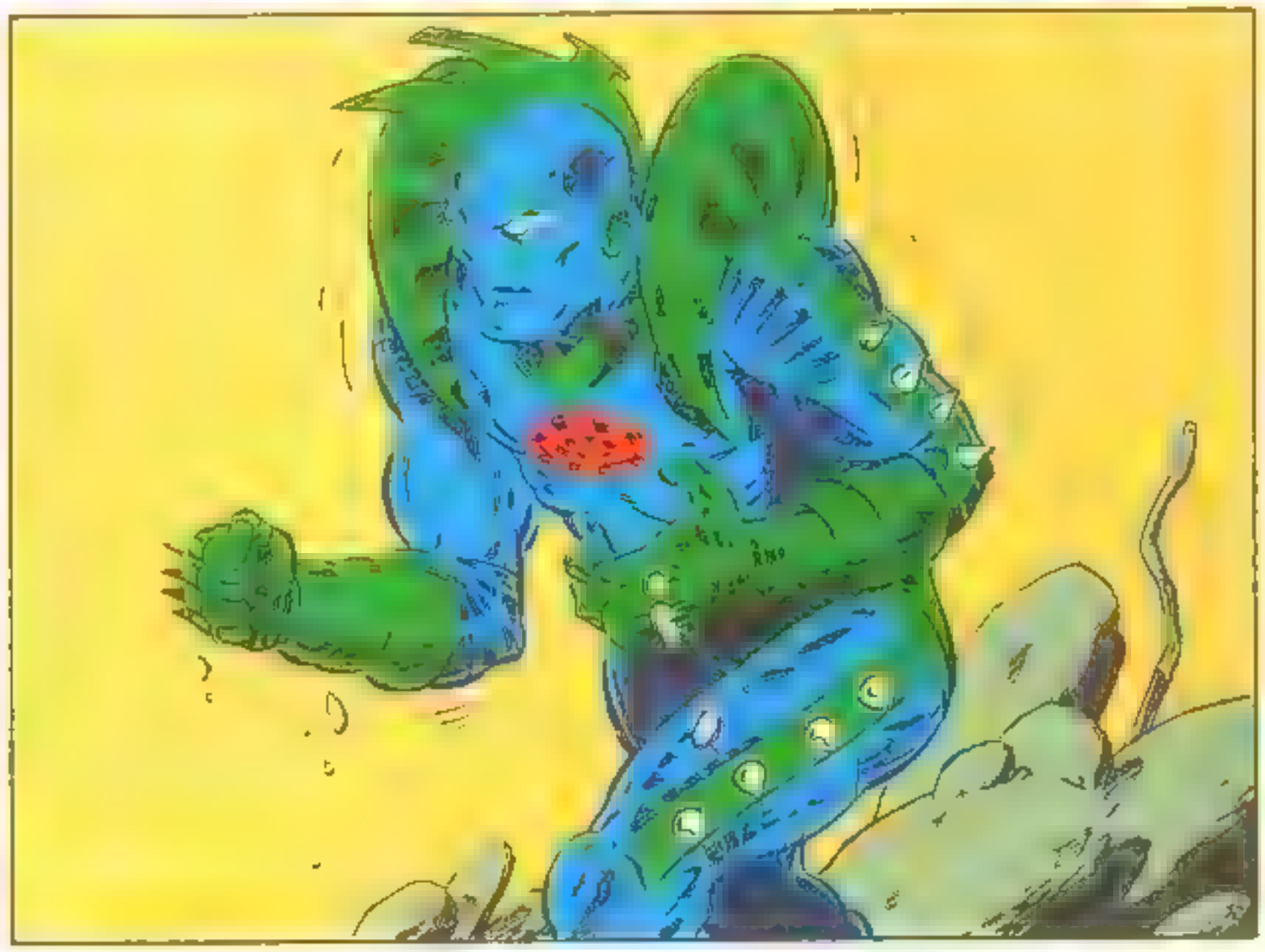
KA-BOOM!


SO MUCH FOR THAT.

I *MEANT* TO DO THAT-- DEFLECTING CHALLENGER'S SHOTS. AS USUAL, IT'S *TALISMAN* WHO PULLS THE JUSTICE MACHINE THROUGH ON THE TOUGH ONES.


THAT'S IT, TALISMAN, YOU'RE MAGGOT-FOOD! THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU TAKE CREDIT FOR OUR WORK!
HERE WE GO AGAIN.
DEMON .. CALM DOWN.
OUTSIDE TALISMAN, RIGHT NOW!

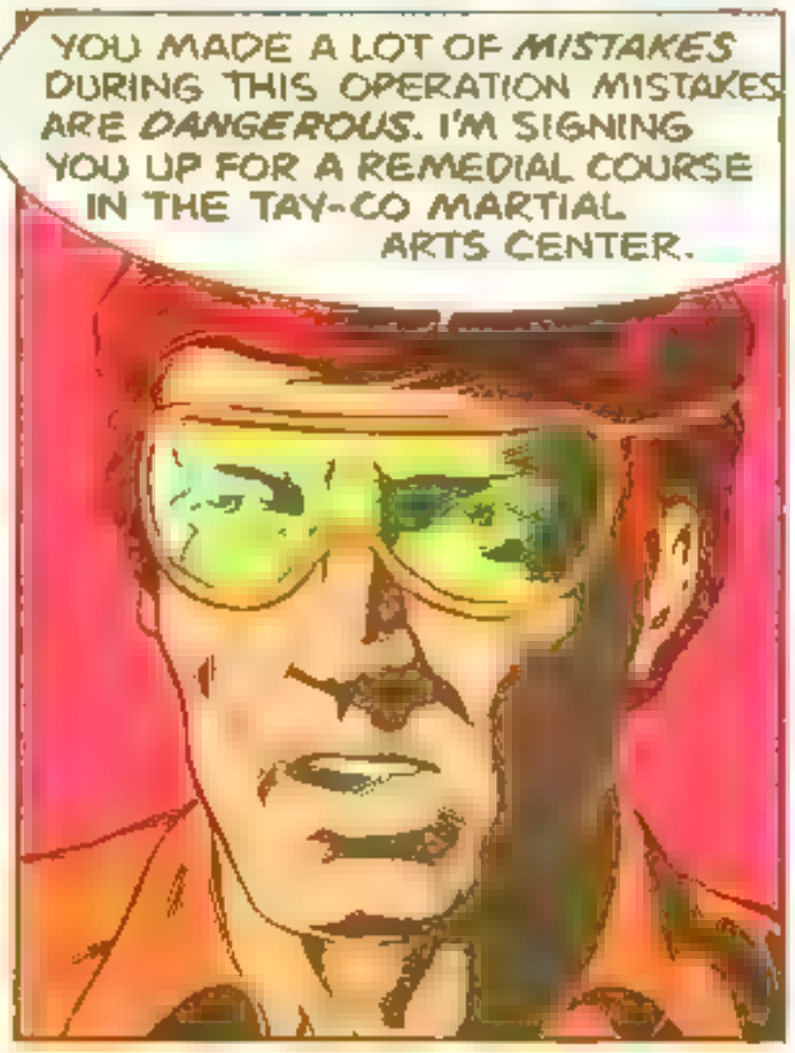
RUMBLE!

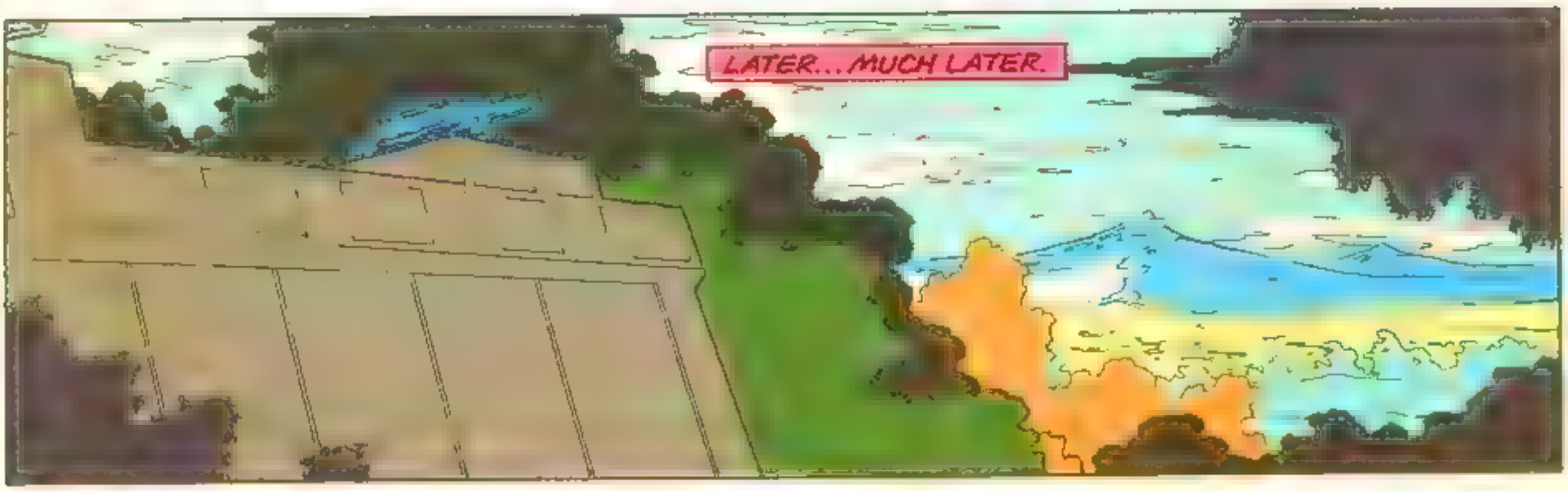


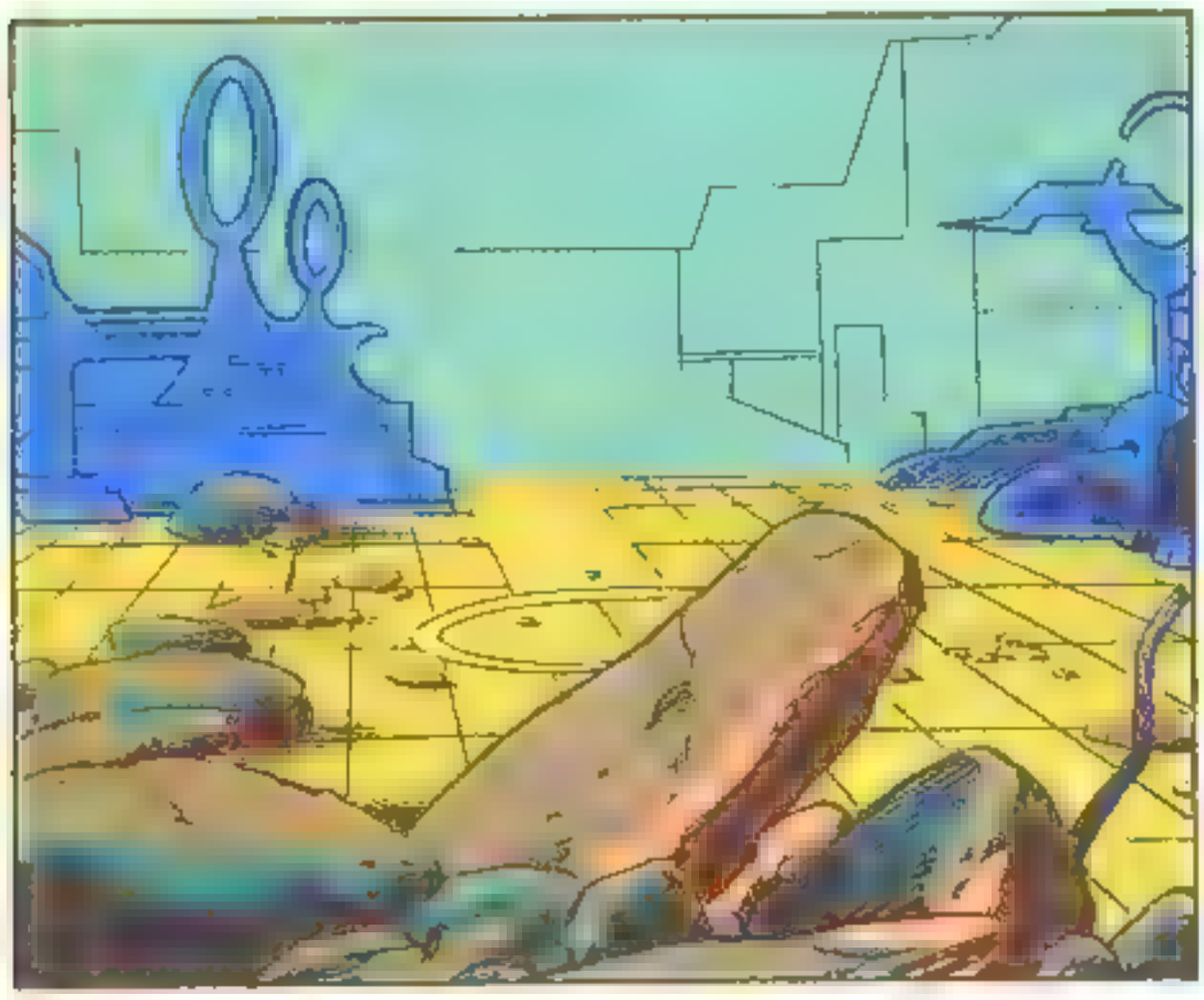
SHUMPF!

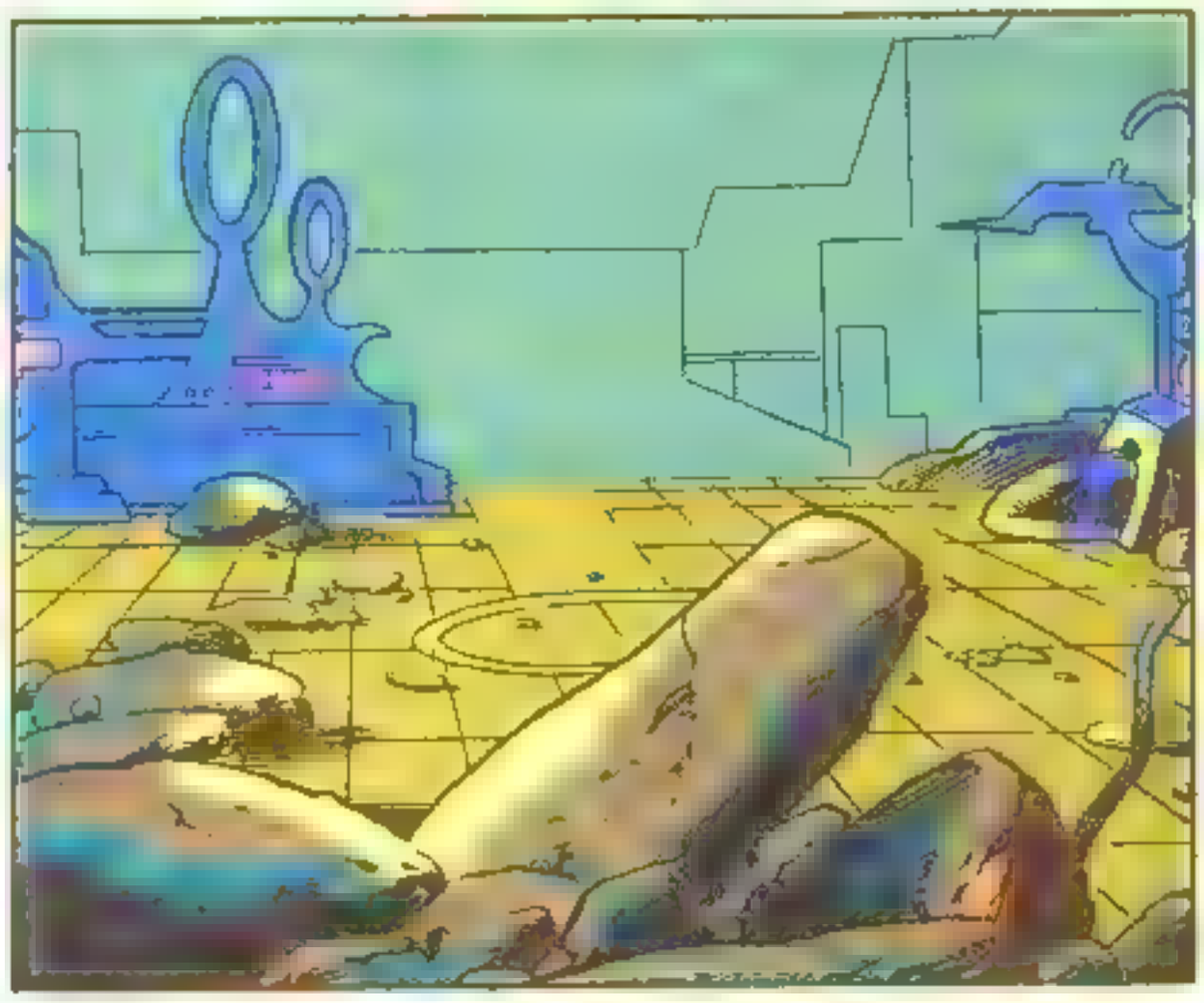
DEMON, GET THE MILITIA IN HERE. I WANT THIS THING IN STASIS IN THREE MINUTES.
RIGHT

THIS WAS A NICE END TO NINE MONTHS OF EXCRUCIATING INVESTIGATIVE WORK. NICE JOB, JUSTICE MACHINE. I'M ORDERING YOU ALL ON TWO WEEKS' VACATION, STARTING IMMEDIATELY

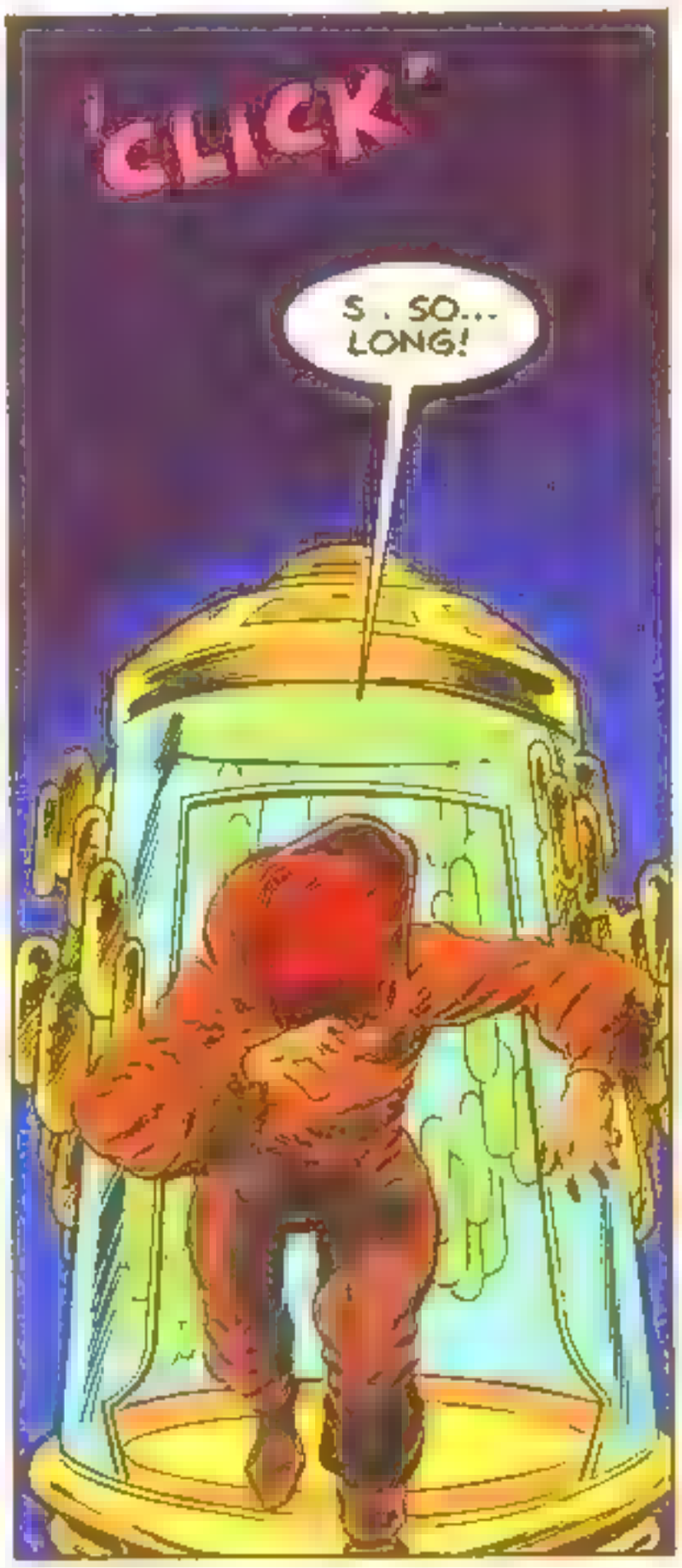


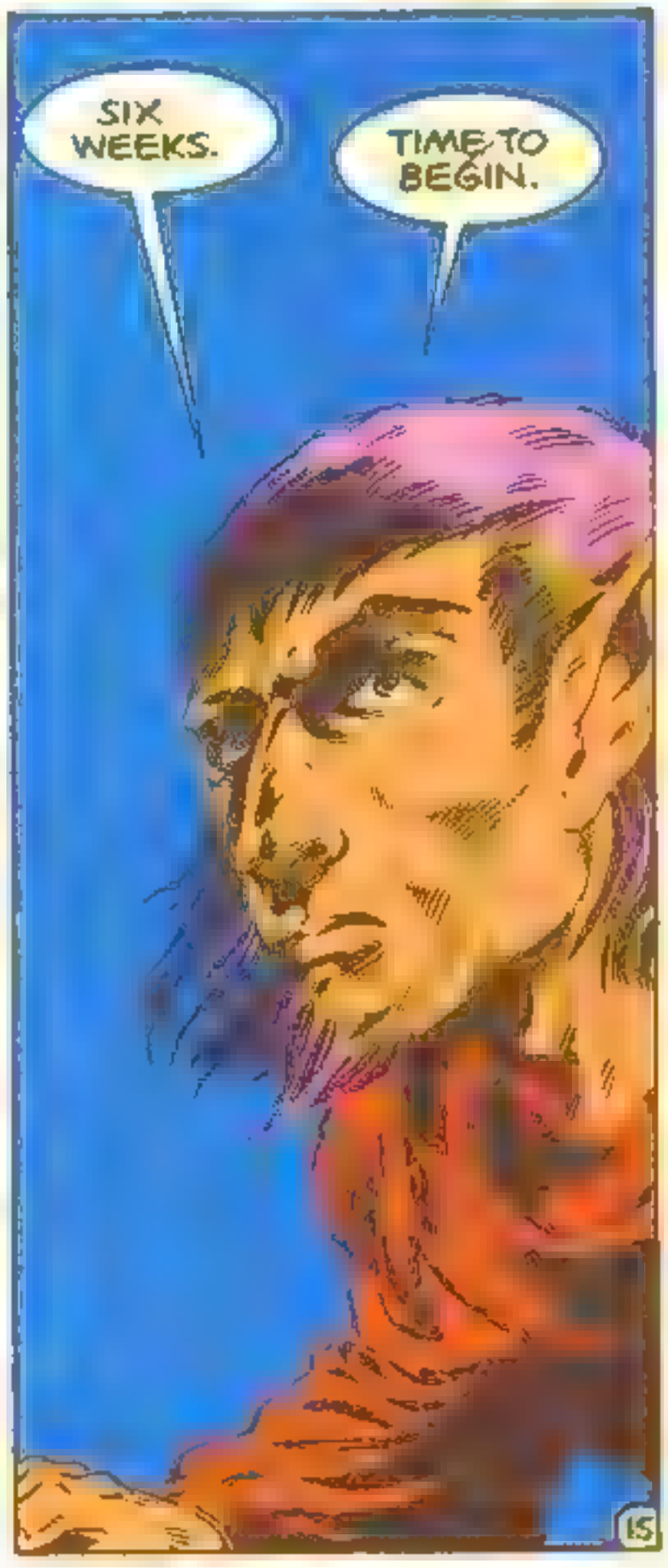

LATER...MUCH LATER.

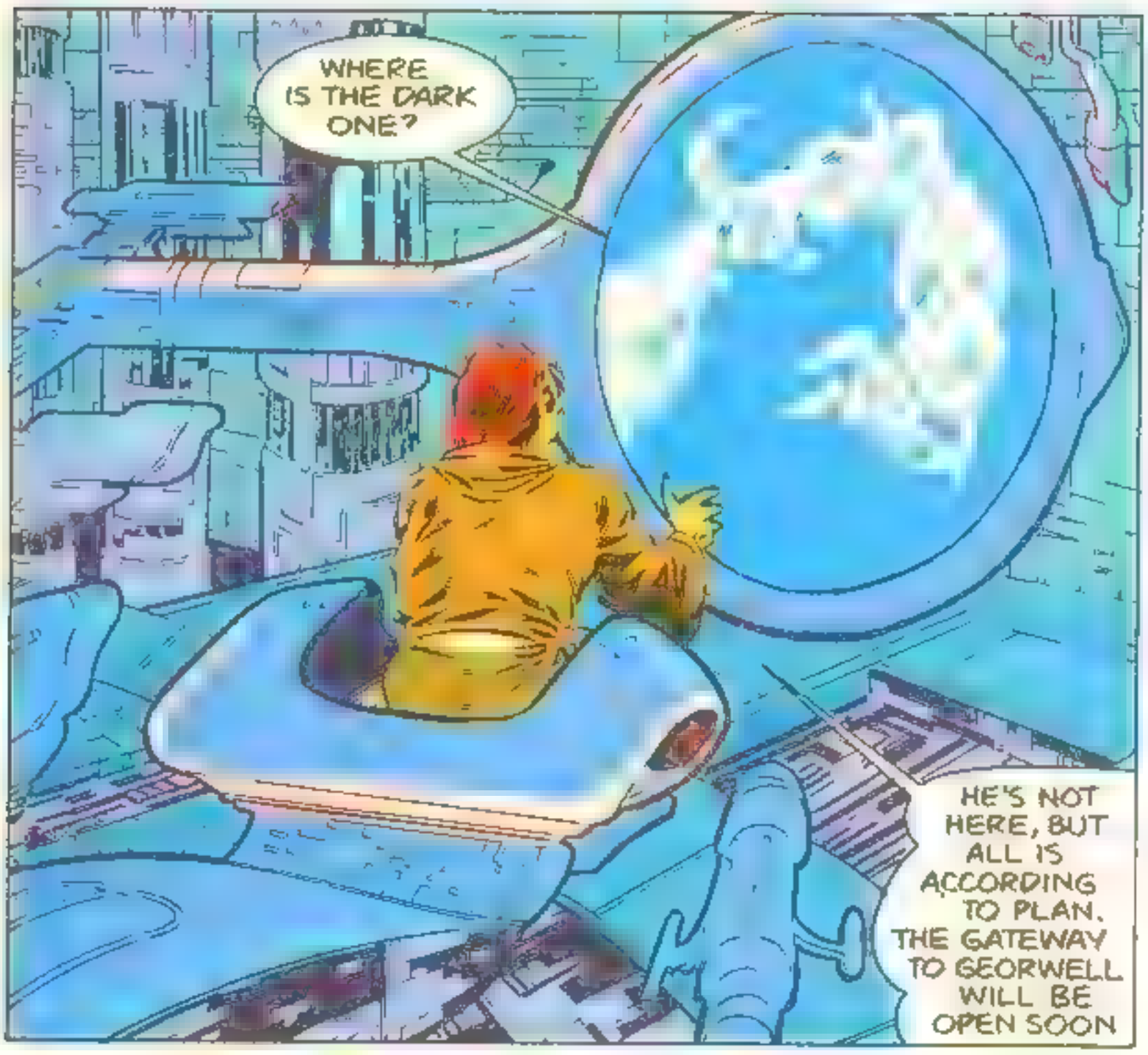




GRRRRRRRRR


"CLICK"
S . SO... LONG!


SIX WEEKS.
TIME TO BEGIN.


WHERE IS THE DARK ONE?
HE'S NOT HERE, BUT ALL IS ACCORDING TO PLAN. THE GATEWAY TO GEORWELL WILL BE OPEN SOON

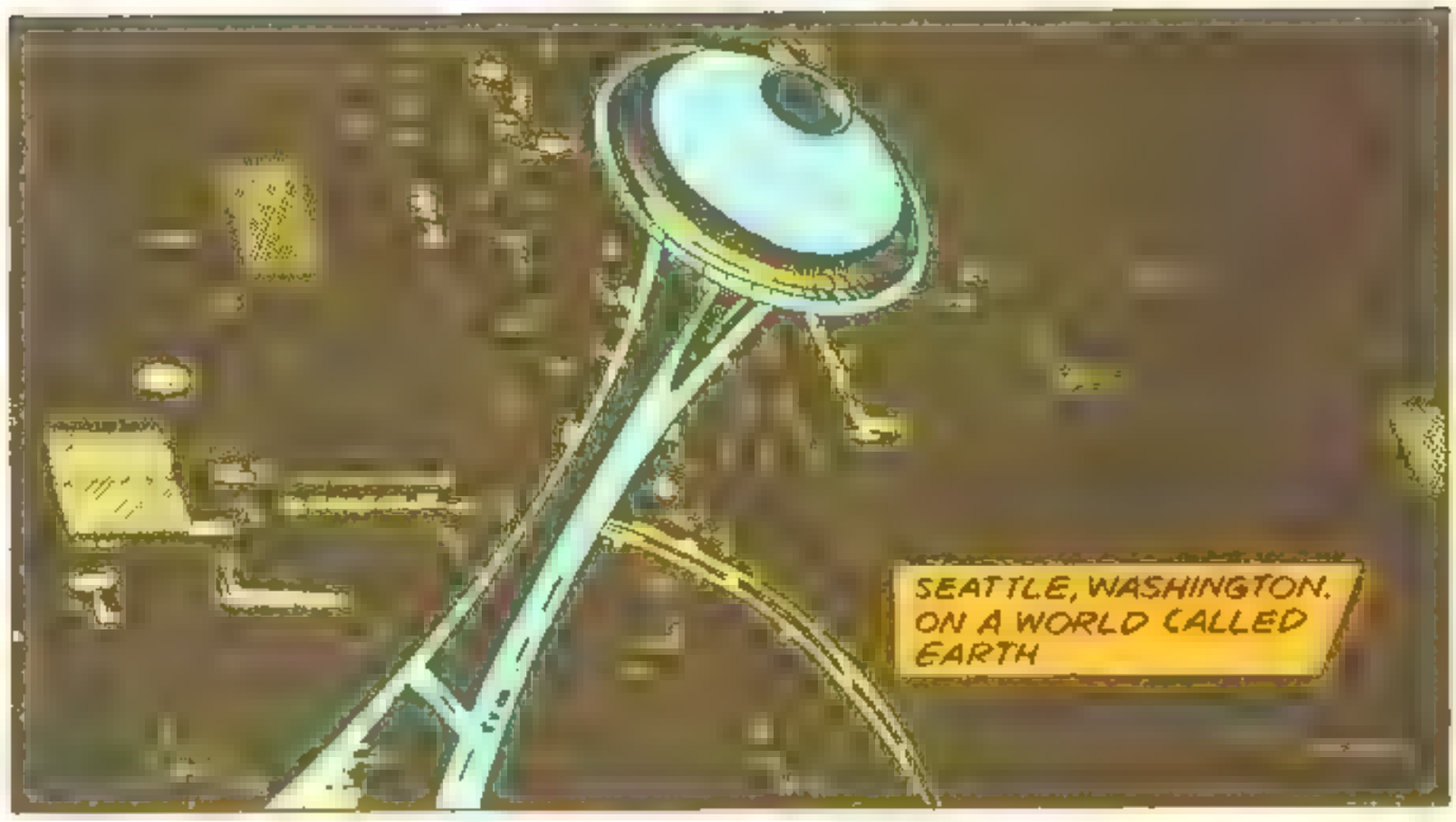
SEE THAT IT IS! YOU HAVE PROMISED US A WORLD. WE ARE NOT A PATIENT RACE!

OUR BARGAIN WILL BE KEPT. THIS ANCIENT BOOK WILL PROVIDE THE WAY.

"WITHIN ITS PAGES ARE THE WORDS OF FORCE THAT WILL SUMMON GREAT POWERS...

".. POWERS FROM BEYOND OUR WORLD ."

". POWERS FROM A WORLD WE CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE."

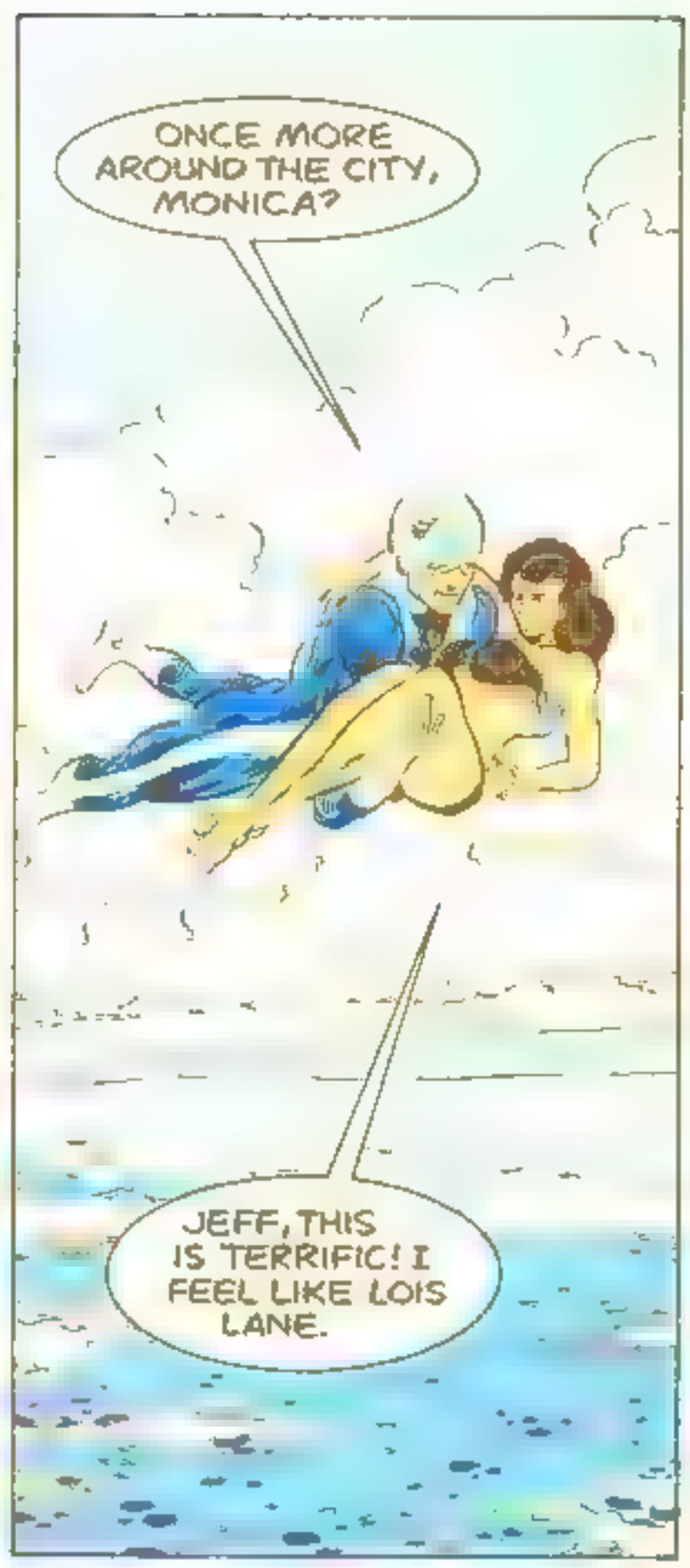

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON. ON A WORLD CALLED EARTH

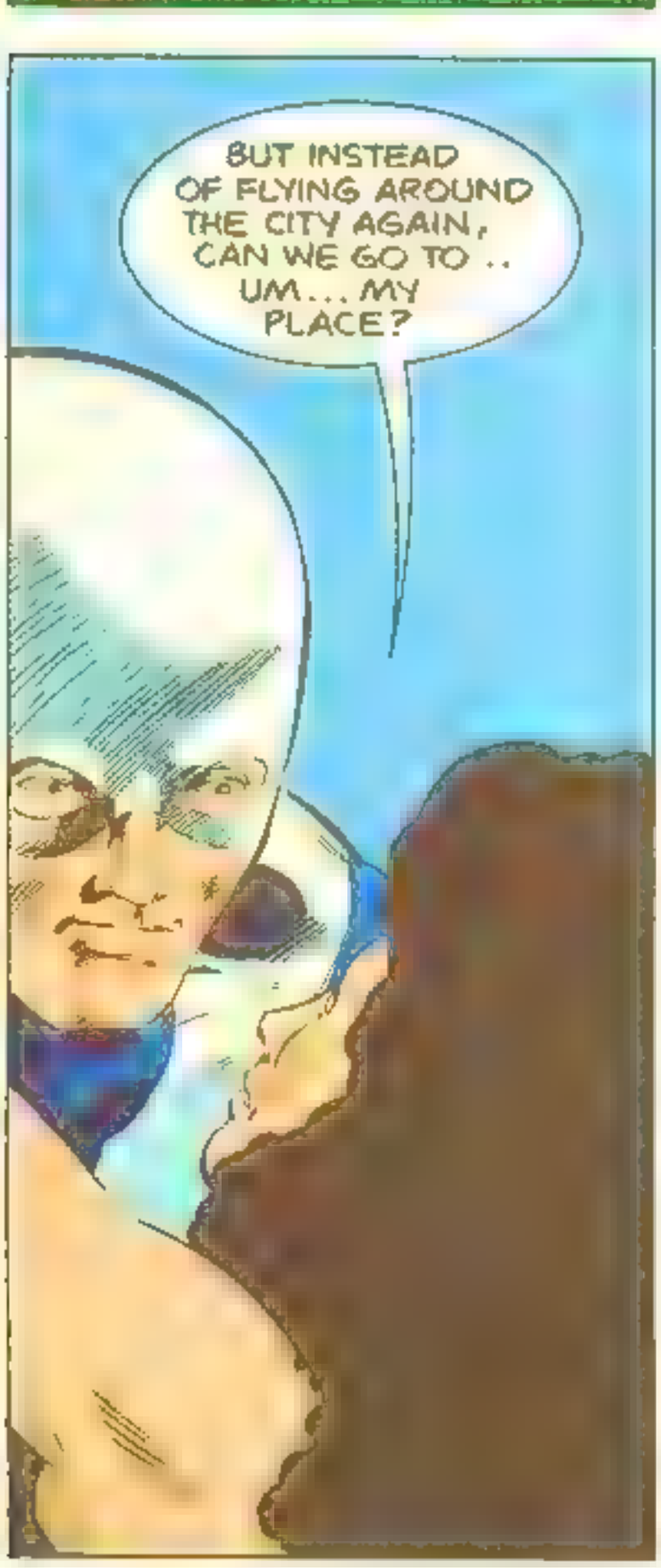
THE GOLDEN ESTATE, HOME OF THE ELEMENTALS
REALLY, LAWRENCE, I CAN'T EAT ANY MORE.

NONSENSE! MY PANCAKES ARE SO LIGHT, YOU CAN EAT A *DOZEN* MORE TRUST ME.
I DON'T KNOW...

IF YOU DON'T EAT WELL, AND EAT ENOUGH, WHY YOU'LL JUST FADE AWAY. SO HOW MANY, TOMMY? TOMMY...?!

LEATHER? SPIKES?! YOU EXPECT ME TO WEAR THAT? NO WAY!
TRY IT YOU'LL LOOK GREAT IN THIS. TRUST ME


ONCE MORE AROUND THE CITY, MONICA?
JEFF, THIS IS TERRIFIC! I FEEL LIKE LOIS LANE.


BUT INSTEAD OF FLYING AROUND THE CITY AGAIN, CAN WE GO TO .. UM... MY PLACE?

JEFF?... JEFF?! WHAT ARE YOU...? DON'T YOU DARE DROP ME!

JEFF! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
SPLASH!

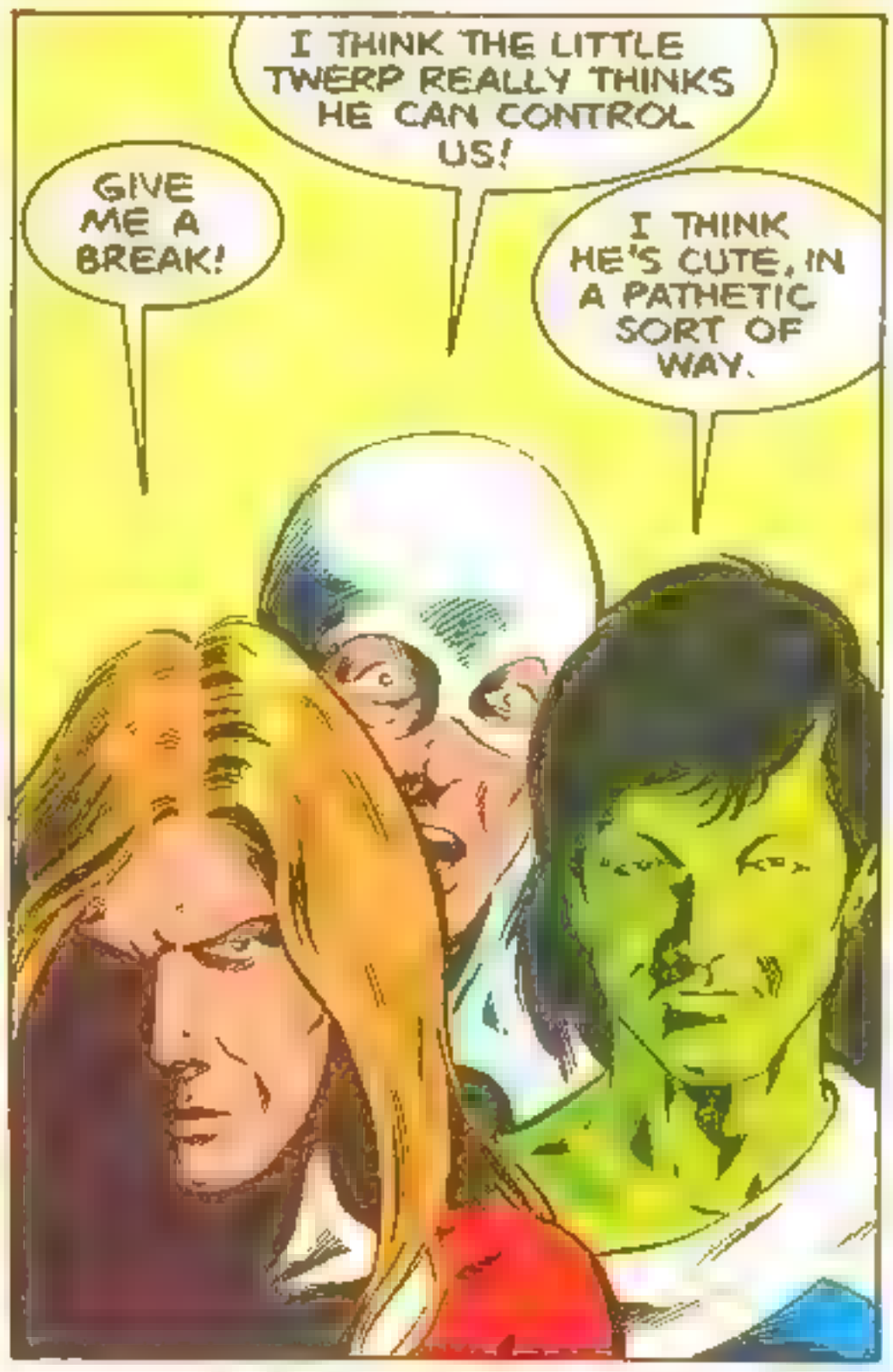
THESE ARE THE ELEMENTALS: MORNINGSTAR, VORTEX, FATHOM, AND MONOLITH. THEY HAVE ALL EXPERIENCED PAINFUL DEATH AND THE TORTURE OF SUPERNATURAL REBIRTH. THEY HAVE FOUGHT EVIL GODS AND MADDENED WIZARDS. THEY HAVE NEVER SUFFERED ANYTHING MORE TERRIBLE THAN THIS--BEING RIPPED FROM THEIR OWN WORLD AND SENT SPIRALING THROUGH THE ETHER TO...

...GEORWELL.
WHAT THE HELL?

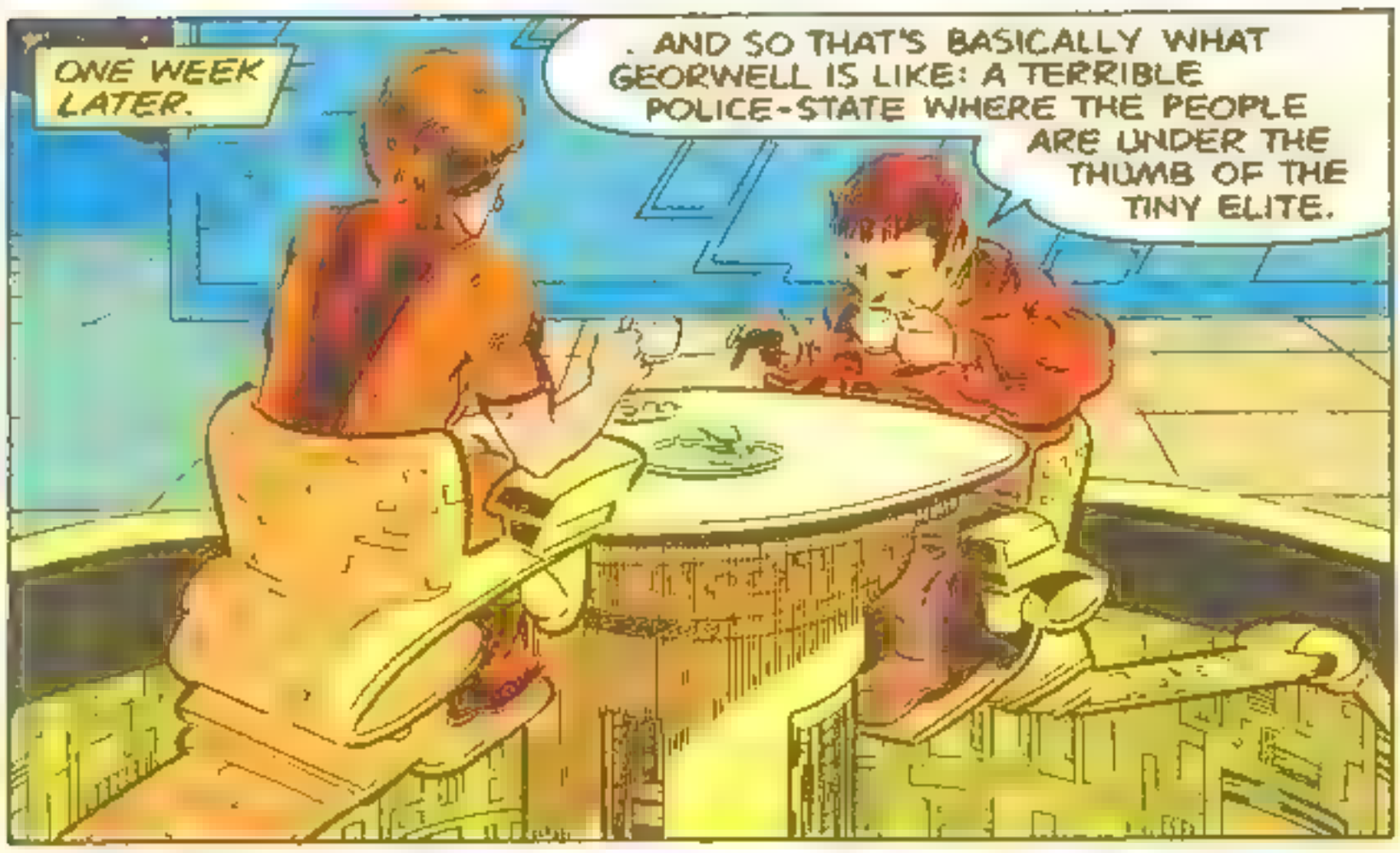
I'VE DONE IT! I'VE SUMMONED CREATURES OF THE ELEMENTS-- EARTH, AIR, FIRE, AND WATER.
STRUGGLE ALL YOU WANT, MINDLESS ONE. YOU CANNOT BREAK FREE OF THE MAGIC CIRCLE!

MISTER, I'LL ONLY SAY THIS ONCE. LET US FREE, OR ELSE!

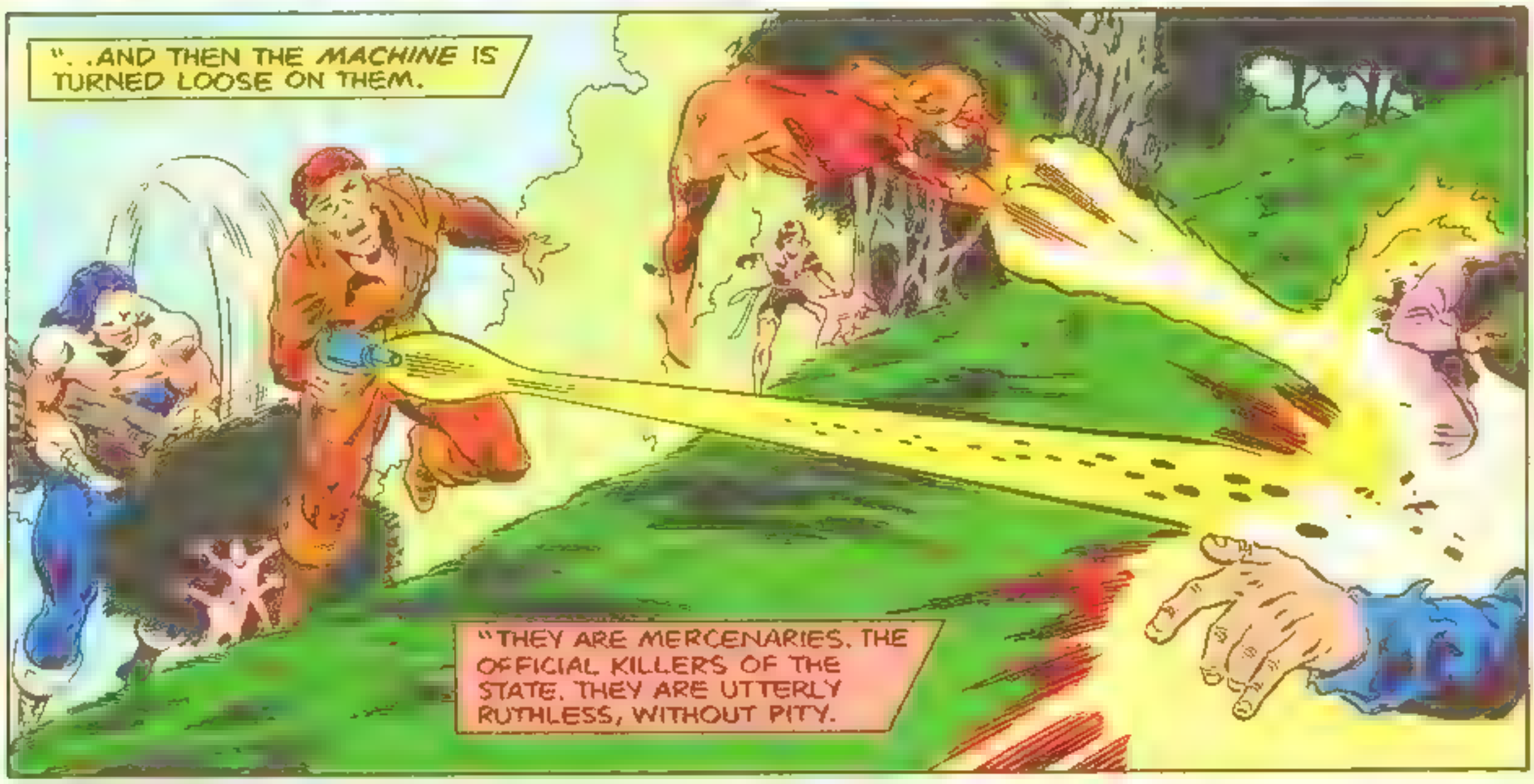
POWERS OF EARTH, FIRE, SEA, AND SKY: YOU ARE ANIMATED BY ME AND UNDER MY CONTROL! YOU MUST OBEY ME!


GIVE ME A BREAK!
I THINK THE LITTLE TWERP REALLY THINKS HE CAN CONTROL US!
I THINK HE'S CUTE, IN A PATHETIC SORT OF WAY.

YOU'RE UNDER MY...
WHY AREN'T YOU UNDER MY CONTROL?

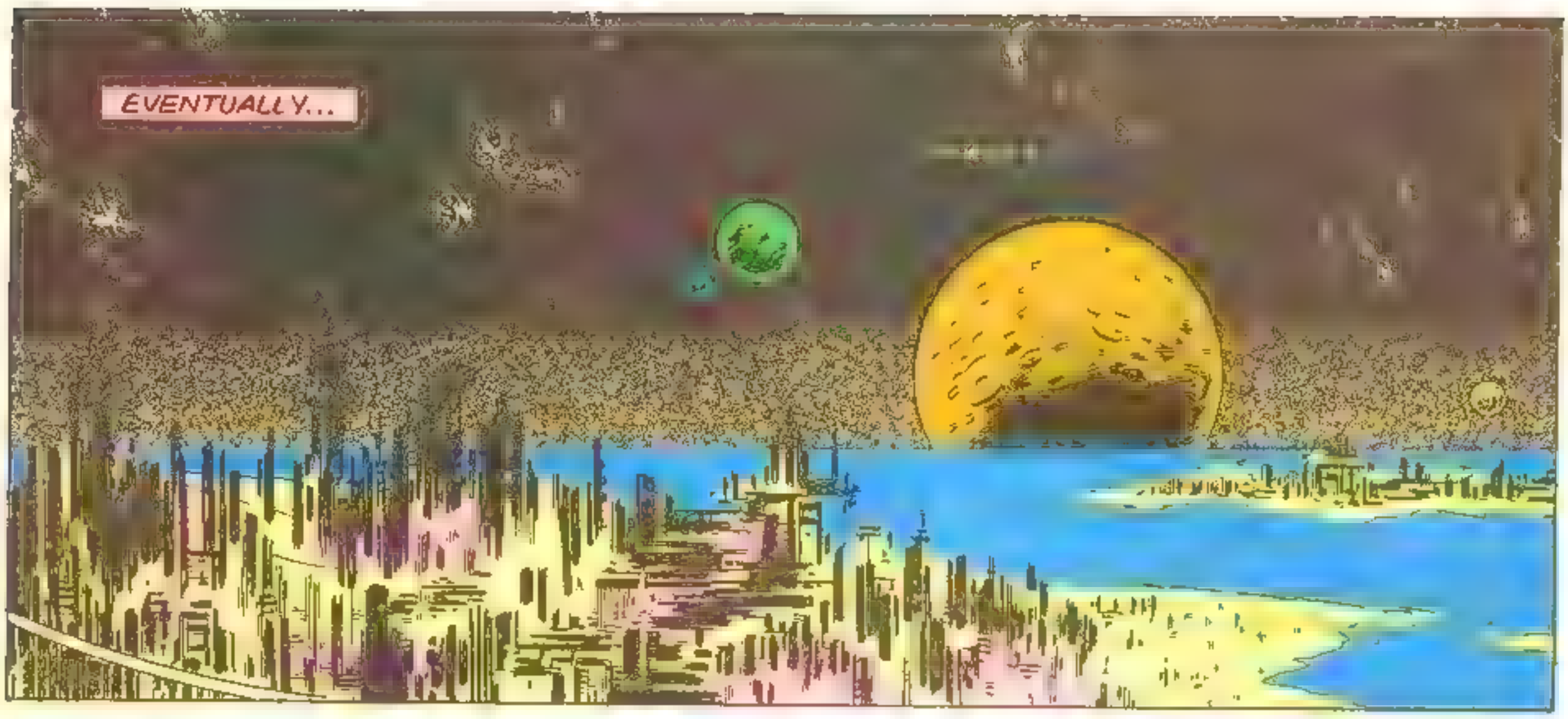

ONE WEEK LATER.
. AND SO THAT'S BASICALLY WHAT GEORWELL IS LIKE: A TERRIBLE POLICE-STATE WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE UNDER THE THUMB OF THE TINY ELITE.

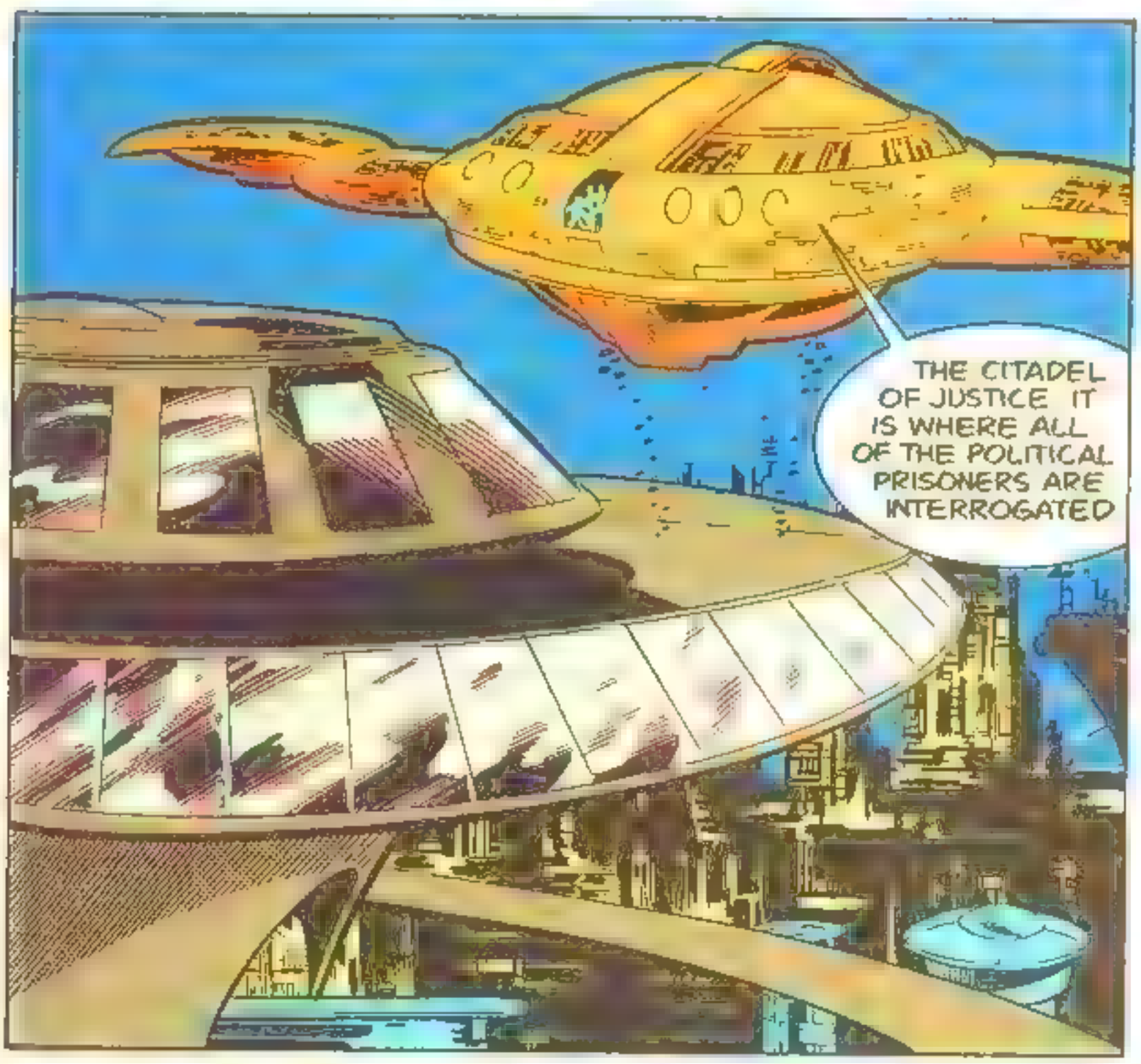
THE FEW VISIONARIES THAT RISE UP ARE IMMEDIATELY CONDEMNED BY THE GOVERNMENT...

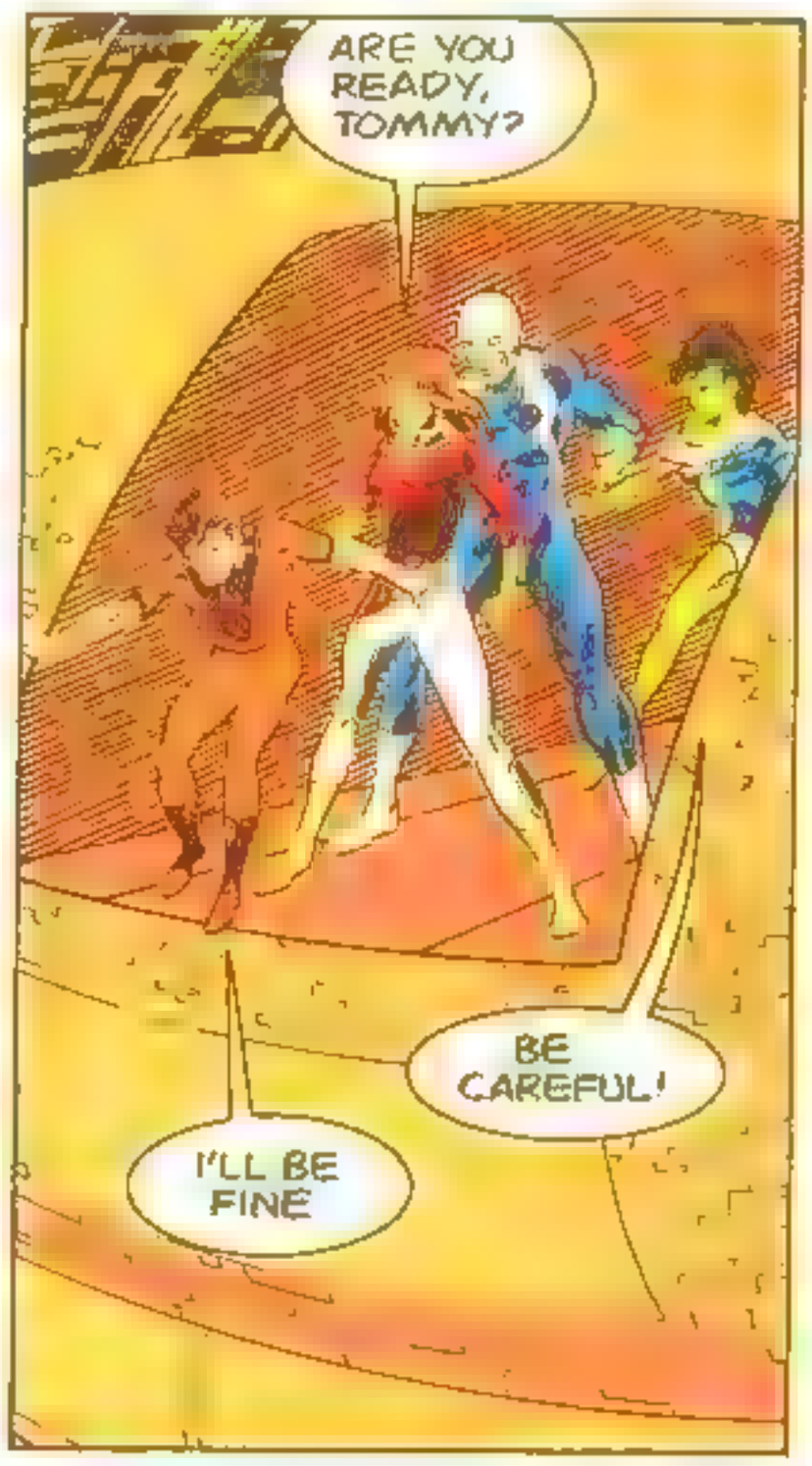

". .AND THEN THE MACHINE IS TURNED LOOSE ON THEM.
"THEY ARE MERCENARIES. THE OFFICIAL KILLERS OF THE STATE. THEY ARE UTTERLY RUTHLESS, WITHOUT PITY.

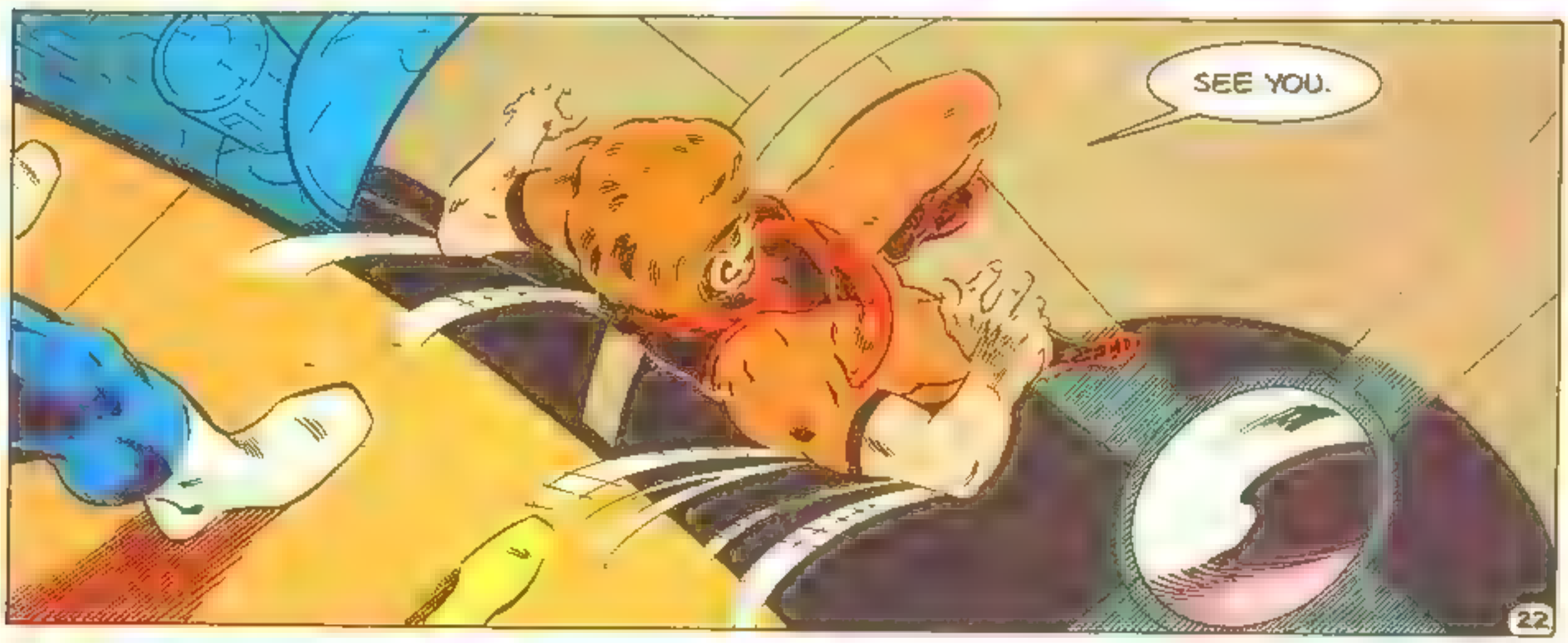
"AND NOW THEY HAVE TAKEN MY MASTER-- THE ONLY TRUE FREEDOM FIGHTER LEFT ON GEORWELL. WILL YOU HELP ME? WILL YOU FREE HIM?"

WELL?
IT'S WHAT WE WERE MADE FOR. ISN'T IT?
IT'S OUR JOB NOW, I GUESS.
OKAY. WE'LL DO IT.


EVENTUALLY...

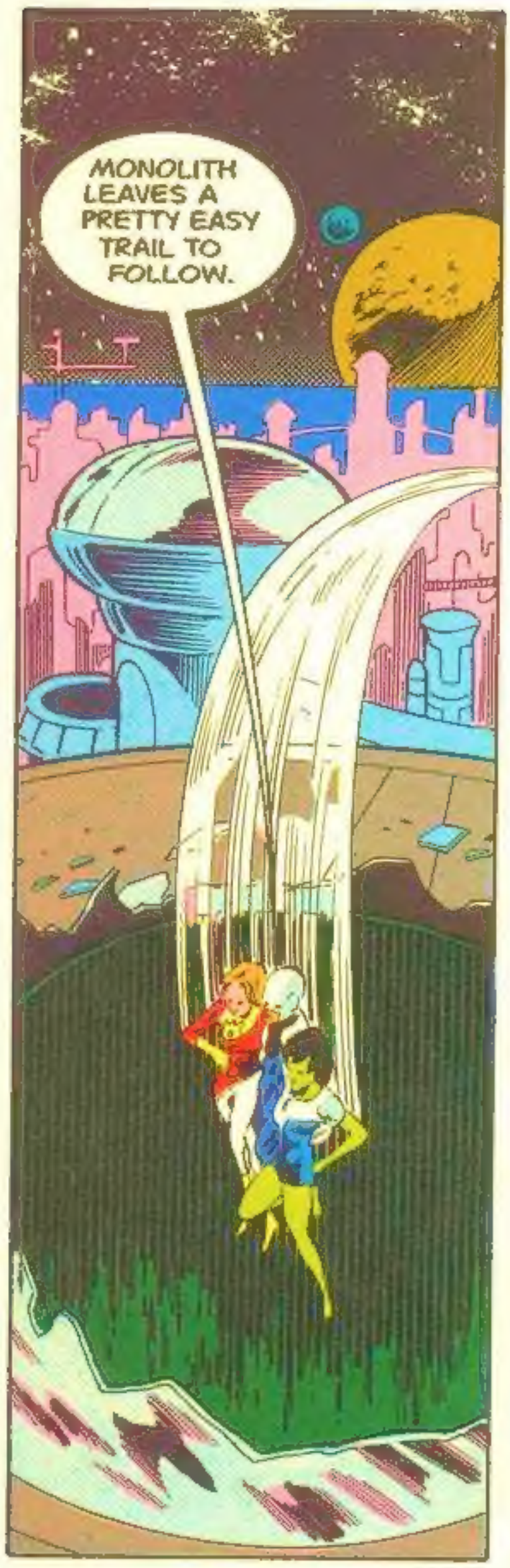

THE CITADEL OF JUSTICE IT IS WHERE ALL OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE INTERROGATED


ARE YOU READY, TOMMY?
BE CAREFUL!
I'LL BE FINE


SEE YOU.

KABOOM!

THAT'S OUR CUE. HOLD ON!
QUICKLY!


MONOLITH LEAVES A PRETTY EASY TRAIL TO FOLLOW.

CHRIST, WHAT A MESS!
TOMMY, ARE YOU OKAY?
I WILL BE, AS SOON AS I GET OUT OF THIS HOLE.

WELL, SHALL WE RESCUE A DISSIDENT OR TWO?

VORTEX, TAKE THE POINT. ELEMENTALS, LET'S GO!

ALL CLEAR SO FAR.
UH-OH!
KAZZLAP!
KATHUNK!
VORTEX!

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, BY ORDER OF THE JUSTICE MACHINE!
TO BE CONTINUED.